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ABSTRACT

This report addresses the interface between school and home and how this relationship needs to be addressed sensitively and effectively. Part 1 discusses how adult education strategies aimed at parents of children suffering discrimination and at those exerting prejudices through mechanisms of socialization of these children could play a crucial role in overcoming xenophobia and intolerance and emphasizes the school's role as the forum for socialization. Part 2 addresses contextual factors affecting the home-school interface and a triple jeopardy of social, economic, and political marginalization being passed on to successive generations in the minority ethnic and migrant communities. It recommends a "Learning to Live in a Multicultural Society: Adult Education and Training Network." The aim of this network would be to help participants adapt good practice to their local circumstances and to develop policy recommendations. Next, a strategic framework for action with three strands: strategies for organizational change and development; strategies to achieve equality of opportunity for individuals from minority ethnic communities; and community development/capacity building is presented. Part 3 offers European perspectives and case studies on home-school liaison from the United Kingdom, France, and Germany to show the fundamental structural differences. Case studies are also provided for the Pontian Greeks and Tuscany. Part 4 lists ideas to develop good practice in home-school liaison and training ideas for improving home-school liaison. (YLB)

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**Learning to Live in a
Multi-Cultural Society:**

Home-School Liaison

NIACE
THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION
FOR ADULT LEARNING



**Learning to Live in a
Multi-Cultural Society:**

Home-School Liaison

Final report of a series of workshops sponsored by
the European Commission in 1994

'Racism essentially operates through the silencing and invisibility of the child's cultural and racial identity in the learning environment through both the play and learning materials that are provided and the teacher's ethos, style of communication, and values; the silencing of the child's home language, the invisibility of her history, the absence of familiar food, music, clothes, the non or negative references to skin colour, features, family and spiritual values.'

The Early Years: Laying the Foundations for Racial Equality by I Siraj-Blechford, 1994

NIACE
THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION
FOR ADULT LEARNING



Institute for International Co-operation of the German Adult Education Association, Bonn (IIZ/DVV)

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Part One

Background

1. Introduction

From 'them' to 'us'

In our communities in Western Europe in the latter half of the twentieth century, there have been enormous inwards movements of peoples, many of them workers needed and welcomed by the employing sections of the host countries. Everyone has heard of the Turkish workers in Germany, and the influx of workers from the Caribbean and Asia into the United Kingdom.

While there are common currents, the countries of the European Union also have different experiences and, therefore, different contributions to make. For example, the UK experience with a significant 'black British' population and a minority community of such diversity that one London school can claim that more than 50 languages are spoken in the homes of its pupils, is different from the German experience. The ease or difficulty of gaining citizenship in the new country will also be a factor in how far individuals from minority groups can play a full part in civic life on equal terms with others.

The challenges and benefits of these developments form the background to the present work, which has urgency and significance because of a critical shift in the realities of the situation. Early on in the history of these movements of people, it was thought that the arriving people needed to be assimilated into the host culture. Now, it is perceived that the need is to recognise the part each culture will play in a multicultural society, and how these different cultures combine with the host culture in those early years, but itself has been transformed. Those who were 'them' have become part of a new 'us'. Nobody is excluded from transformation.

It is often assumed that the mere presence of minorities of a different culture leads automatically to a multicultural society in which the cultural minorities have ample possibilities to maintain and develop their individual cultures, identities, relationships and associations, so that both the original population and the newcomers can inter-relate with one another on the basis of equal rights. This is not the case.

The immigration of ethnic minorities nearly always evokes feelings of fear and rejection in part or all of the indigenous population. Hostile reactions become the order of the day and strongly influence the behaviour and attitudes of migrants. In periods of economic crisis, the danger exists that a vicious circle arises hindering the development of a multicultural society where ethnic minorities can develop their respective cultures and find a new identity, which is essential for the development of equality of relations between local inhabitants and migrants.

Even second and third generations of people of foreign extraction living in European countries stand under the influence of the culture of their country of origin. They may be reluctant to become acquainted with the new culture or even to learn the language of the host country. This often has to be understood, however, as a reaction to rejection and discrimination. The indigenous population is slow in recognising that foreigners do not exist as a separate undifferentiated and stereotyped category of persons, that they have good, bad, friendly and unfriendly people among them just as there are among the indigenous people themselves.

Incidental learning

The process of coming to understand this is incidental, often gained only through chance encounters of a positive nature. The call for intercultural learning in schools and in all other educational institutions has become increasingly loud in the last few years, in order that a multicultural togetherness based on common effort and mutual assistance between migrants and local population can be attained.

For example, the largest group of foreigners in the Federal Republic of Germany is made up of workers who originally came to Germany with the intention of working there before returning home to build up a new existence from savings made. In the 1970s it became obvious that a large number of these guest workers, particularly those recruited by German authorities from the Mediterranean countries, did not wish to return but had instead established themselves more or less permanently. "They called for workers and human beings turned up!" wrote Max Frisch in 1975.

Discussions about a multicultural society replaced discussions on the question of the assimilation or integration of foreigners living in Germany. It was understood that the indigenous majority or public authorities would make decisions. Only the multicultural approach would make it possible to see the needs and interest of both sides and to pay more attention to the problems of migrants than had previously been the case.

Adult education has a role here for the majorities as well as the cultural minorities. Experience with the Adult Further Education programmes, the Volkshochschulen, is a convincing example of this. In these programmes, the needs and interests of the various target groups are respected and relevant pedagogical methods developed. These should be compared at European level with the methods and concepts of partners in other countries and developed further.

The importance of school

The situation of cultural minorities differs very much from one European country to another, but there are similarities, one of which is the importance of school.

A school is a central meeting place in between social classes and cultures. Children often feel even more helpless than their parents in addressing strangers, especially when rejection and hostility against the unknown is prevailing in their families. But these children are expected to spend every day

in institutions in which they frequently feel unsure and in which they are confronted with conflicts and tensions between children of different cultures.

In Germany nobody asks how foreign children feel about their schools. Are they successful in building up positive links to the other pupils and to the teachers? Do their parents support or prevent this process? What does it mean for parents, when every day they have to entrust their children to a world in which they themselves often do not feel welcome?

This book, and the project on which it is based, asks these questions, and many more. Above all, it seeks to deepen our understanding of the opportunities that exist in the experiences in, of and around school, to help us all to build and live in an ever-developing multicultural society.

2. Background to project

Good practice in home-school liaison

It is now widely accepted that positive parental involvement in partnership with schools is one of the prerequisites of effective schooling and that co-operation between home and school can raise educational achievement. Accordingly, there is now considerable interest in encouraging parents to participate more directly in their children's schooling, to give parents more access to information about education, and to develop more structured home-school links.

Given the relationships that ethnic minority parents have had with schools over the past 30 years, it is likely that the involvement of these parents as genuine partners in education will be more difficult to achieve than that of white parents. Racial and cultural differences have added an extra dimension to problems of home-school relationships. Minority home-school encounters have taken place in a society marked by racial antagonisms and inter-cultural tensions rather than by harmony – and teachers, who have not been well equipped during their training to deal on a professional level with ethnic minority parents, have often clung to negative stereotyping and patronising views and attitudes. The research literature into the 1990s suggests that most, if not many, educational professionals still regard ethnic minority parents as posing problems for schools, rather than as assets in the educational process.

Training ideas to improve home-school liaison

This report is a product of a series of two workshops which specifically addressed the issue of discrimination experienced by the school children of minority ethnic communities. Adult education strategies aimed at both the parents of children suffering discrimination and at those exerting prejudices through mechanisms of socialisation of these children will play a crucial role in overcoming xenophobia and intolerance.

The school's role as the forum for the socialisation of individuals is beyond doubt. School is part of an educational system able to transmit knowledge and attitudes. This is linked with the development of the family, which is tending to



confer new tasks on schools rather than those strictly connected with teaching. From the age of two or three years onwards, the children of ethnic minority parents bring their differences with them in the educational setting outside the family. Coping with these differences at so early an age is bound to require an educational model for ensuring co-operation between the partners involved (parents, schools, local authorities and social partners – including associations). This educational model does not exist and will therefore have to be invented.

Adult education – providing agencies throughout Europe have proved their ability to tackle the wholeness of education and social/cultural problems as they focus the problems of their clientele in a comprehensive way. They offer counselling and guidance for parents suffering the effects of social segregation; they are engaged in discussing with local authorities the adoption of non-discriminatory practices. For decades they have been involved in teaching adults how to improve their employment opportunities and react to the barriers raised against them: by building transcultural means of communication, by building the first components of an educational community; in which each would have its place and role – school, family, neighbourhood, media, social partners, associations and local authorities.

This report contains examples of current practice, an elaboration of common themes, and guidelines for developing good practice in respect of home-school liaison.

Part Two

Context, summary and recommendations

1. Home-school liaison: General contextual factors

- 1.1** This report addresses the interface between school and home/community and how this relationship needs to be addressed sensitively and effectively.

The number of non-nationals in member states is estimated at 7-9 per cent, but this does not take account of the numbers of black and minority ethnic students who are nationals, but none-the-less apt to be victims of racism and intolerance on the grounds of colour, language or religion. Most school pupils will now have experience within or outside their schools of mixing with people of different ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds.

- 1.2** The home-school interface is also related to the development of linguistic and cultural diversity within the member states of the European Union, as a consequence of growing cross-frontier mobility as well as the presence of the growing numbers of third country immigrants. Since all member states have now become destinations for immigration, these issues are common to their education systems and should, because of their importance, become the subject of future exchange of information and experience, such as provided for in Article 126 of the treaty on European Union. In this context, the declaration of 1997 as European Year against Racism and Xenophobia is likely to prove an important step.

Cultural and linguistic diversity

- 1.3** As this report shows, in all member states cultural and linguistic diversity has developed to a point where most schools accommodate pupils from immigrant backgrounds. Indeed, cultural and linguistic diversity in schools is becoming the norm. This is in itself a consequence of dynamic development of the Union, both internally and in terms of its position in the world.

This confronts the education systems of the member states with a series of new challenges, related both to the struggle against failure at school (as one of the key elements in the struggle against social exclusion), and the need to improve the quality and diversity of their service. Even more significantly, however, this points to a potential dilemma in the development of a Union which prides itself on its determination and ability to maintain its diversity and respect specific identities of its member states and all their citizens.

In the wake of increased intra-community mobility, new linguistic and cultural communities emerge in the member states; education systems and schools are confronted with the challenge of integrating all pupils into a unified educational framework able to ensure equality of opportunity and optimum success for all pupils while at the same time respecting their specific cultural identities.

Potentials good and bad

- 1.4** This situation holds a potential for positive change, modernisation and diversification on the one hand, and a danger of widening social division, of social/cultural segregation and exclusion – and ultimately for the spread of inter-ethnic conflict and violence – on the other hand.
- 1.5** The general socio-economic and political situation confronting minority ethnic communities does not bode well unless we are cognisant of it and develop strategies to ameliorate the impact of potentially increasing social exclusion.

Minority ethnic communities in most states in Western Europe now account for between 5 and 10 per cent of the total population. This population is projected to rise to 10 to 15 per cent by the end of this century given its relatively youthful demographic profile.

Patterns of immigration, mainly from Southern Europe and Northern Africa, have created multi-ethnic communities in several parts of the EC. Whilst acknowledging that phrases like “multi-ethnic” or even “multi-cultural” may not be seen as appropriate by some, it cannot be denied that national, ethnic, racial and cultural diversity has become a characteristic feature of European society, particularly in the larger urban agglomerations where most of the newcomers have settled.

The recent developments in Central and Eastern Europe, with the introduction of market-orientated economies, will undoubtedly bring about patterns of unemployment, reduction of social security and marginalisation which will in turn bring about a higher degree of economically motivated migration to the richer neighbouring countries and so will add to the growth of a multi-ethnic pattern within the EC.

- 1.6** It is quite clear that minority ethnic and migrant communities have experienced and are experiencing a process of direct and indirect structural discrimination. The overall social/economic profile of minority ethnic communities and migrant populations depict this sharply. They face:
- considerably higher levels and longer periods of unemployment
 - higher percentage of employment in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs
 - overcrowded housing, bad housing conditions and poor general living environment
 - greater incidence of poverty and low income
 - higher proportion of men and women criminalised through inappropriate police action and culturally-biased judicial processes
 - low educational attainment
 - spatial and social segregation from their respective “host” community
 - higher levels of theft, street crime, youth delinquency, violence,

- prostitution and drug abuse
- increasing psychological distress (depression, anxiety states, addictiveness) due to multiple psychological disturbances
- greater incidence of physical and mental illness
- greater proportion of family separation and women becoming solely responsible for bringing up their children
- an ever-increasing number of men who are isolated, homeless, prone to alcohol and other addiction and obviously 'living on the streets'
- lower standards of public sector service provision
- continual increase in the level of ethnically – or racially – motivated attacks against them, including in extreme cases murder and arson.

Marginalisation

- 1.7 Alongside this bleak social/economic profile there is added marginalisation through inadequate mechanisms whereby ethnic minority and migrant communities can participate in the major institutions of the established societies catering for employment, education, housing, social services, etc. This lack of participation is linked in part to barriers of language and literacy, but also more substantially to the institutional routinised discrimination which pervades such institutions. This creates a further jeopardy for ethnic and migrant groups by in effect barring them from the democratic decision-making processes.
- 1.8 This triple jeopardy of social, economic and political marginalisation is being passed on to successive generations in the minority ethnic and migrant communities. A real American-style exclusion and segregation, of which Los Angeles provides a chilling example, is in the making. It is therefore essential to be pro-active in beginning to tackle these problems seriously. The combinations of social and economic disadvantages and lack of actually exercised political rights is a potentially explosive mixture.

2. Home-school liaison: Specific contextual factors

- 2.1 Many minority ethnic group pupils are clearly under-achieving at school. This is reflected in school exclusion/expulsions, examination outcomes, higher levels of unemployment amongst minority ethnic group school leavers and their location in the unskilled and semi-skilled sectors of the economy.

Parental involvement

- 2.2 A number of studies of school effectiveness identify parental involvement as one of the key variables associated with effectiveness in general and with pupil attainment in particular. The more involved parents are with their children's schooling, the greater it seems are the chances of their children doing well. The ways in which parental involvement help children's attainment are not well understood but researchers have highlighted its positive effect on pupil

motivation. Involvement can mean many things, from attending school open days to helping in the classroom. There are three aspects to traditional parental involvement which are worth drawing attention to:

- it is largely concerned with the well-being of the parent's own child
- it has usually been to support the pre-existing value system of the school
- collective action, such as through parents' or parent-teacher associations, has been largely concerned with fund-raising, or transmitting information, and has not usually challenged the school's way of doing things.

School values

- 2.3** The important point is that parents are generally expected to uphold school values, as in ensuring their children do homework, behave in an acceptable way or come to school dressed "appropriately." Parental involvement in identifying and establishing the values which the school will embody is rare. The parents' role is to reinforce existing school values and to support the school if there are problems with their children.

This state of affairs is one which most teachers have found comfortable.

Parents who challenge school values are, like their children, typified as "problems." Such parents can include "pushy" middle class individuals who may complain that their children are not being stretched intellectually as well as those living in areas of multiple deprivation where problems such as non-completion of homework may not be the most urgent priority for a family beset by social and economic difficulties.

3. Summary of findings

- 3.1** Given the limited time and funding available, the project has identified a number of common themes which relate to the home-school interface and also collated some guidelines for developing good practice.

Poor record

- 3.2** Throughout the Community, there is a poor record in establishing effective and productive relationships between parents of minority ethnic communities and school. This relates to a number of factors:
- teacher expectations of pupils whose backgrounds, cultures and languages they do not understand, has been generally low. This is the case despite the fact that whilst migrant parents did not enhance their own levels of qualifications or skills by migration, they were eager for their children to benefit from education and obtain good qualifications and employment. 'While they did not necessarily aspire for their children to be professionals, they did expect them to be given the means to be occupationally secure,' publication title. This mis-match of teacher and parent expectations has stood in the way of effective home-school liaison.

- schools have failed, generally, to recognise the tension between policies of integration and policies which aim to respect and preserve cultural diversity. In effect the culture of migrants is devalued.
- teachers' education and training does not adequately inform them about the lives and backgrounds of minority ethnic group parents and they, therefore, continue to resort to stereotypical beliefs about minority ethnic group homes. Moreover, such information and training as does take place is simplistic and patronising in that it 'often takes a static view of culture – customs and traditions brought by migrants are assumed to be unchanging, and dress, diet, religion and language become problems to be solved rather than attributes to be respected,' publication title. Even teachers in multi-racial schools receive little guidance on contact and communication with minority ethnic group parents and this encourages a stereotyping of the parents which it is not easy to eradicate.
 - communication between home and school is generally inappropriate. It fails to provide information in a way which empowers parents
 - parents face a number of barriers in trying to relate to school: the culture of the school can be intimidating and make no reference to the diversity of ethnicity within it and can lead to parents applying their own negative experiences of the authority and power of the school; language; lack of confidence; lack of knowledge and information
 - good practice in home-school liaison has begun to be developed in some member states. However, this tends to be ad hoc and not part of a holistic community-based/multi-agency approach.

Effective liaison

3.3 Effective home-school liaison involves the need:

- for clarity of communication which informs parents about the curriculum and which informs teachers about children
- for parents to be considered as co-educators with the teachers and for this to be reflected in an involvement in schools, at home and in their children's education
- for parents as co-educators to be extended into the assessment, profiling and reporting systems of schools to take into account a totality of children's achievements
- for parents and teachers to work together in the construction of a curriculum which is relevant and meaningful to the children for whom they have a responsibility
- to predict ahead of time what information parents might value and therefore provide opportunities for them to get that information.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1** Through some small initial funding, the Task Force Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth, the Institute for International Co-operation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV), the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, England and Wales (NIACE) and the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) have been able to develop an embryonic network of practitioners and policy makers which includes representation from France, Germany, England, Northern Ireland, Spain, Greece, Belgium, Italy, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands. Moreover, the network has been in contact with agencies in Austria, Switzerland and Cyprus who had expressed their interest in contributing to the work of the network, which has been now in operation for one-and-a-half years.

Learning to live in a multi-cultural society

- 4.2** Whilst the initial funding was specifically related to producing a report on home-school liaison in respect of ethnic minority under-achievement, the work has demonstrated in microcosm the need for a "Learning to Live in a Multi-Cultural Society: Adult Education and Training Network."
- 4.3** Participants at seminars held in Bristol, Bonn and Florence in 1994 have endorsed the need for such a Network which would:
- highlight and share good models of policy and practice
 - generate "Good Practice Guidelines" in respect of specific concrete areas of work
 - identify specific policies which should be adopted to alleviate and address existing (unmet) and emerging needs
 - facilitate the exchange of information and expertise.

In short, such a Network would act as a kind of "stock exchange" for those engaged in addressing the needs of ethnic minorities and migrant communities.

Participants in the Network would be trained. Improvements of training methodologies would have a multiplier effect on Network members, who in turn would have to use these skills and new techniques in their own pedagogical and organisational approaches in their respective countries and regions.

Anti-racist educational work

The Network would aim at surplus value to be gained especially by adding to the quality of ongoing anti-racist educational work and have standards of quality in this field spread all over Europe. In comparison to other agencies working in this field, the outstanding feature of the Network would be its integration into ongoing adult education provision, reaching up to 20 million participants in adult education classes across the varied forms of adult learning. It would tap into the organisational facilities that could be made more effective in local situations, where the negative effects of discrimination and racism are felt and seen every day.

Distinctive characteristic

The integration of anti-racist and anti-discrimination practice into the many-faceted approaches of adult education provision – in cultural work, in social work, in vocational training and in advocacy work against social exclusion in our societies – is the key distinctive feature, which should be brought to its full potential.

It is not a question of creating a new Network with a single purpose, but of recognising that the distinctive characteristic of this network is the fact that anti-racist and anti-discriminatory work will be embedded into the broad life-oriented work of adult education providers all over Europe.

Aims

The overall aims of the Network therefore will be:

- to help participants to adapt good practice to their own local circumstances and thus improve the quality of the services they deliver to minority ethnic groups
- to develop policy recommendations to local and national governments, to social partners to non-governmental organisations and to the EC.

- 4.4** It is proposed the Network would adopt a strategic framework for action. This strategic framework has three key strands around which specific issues could be addressed by different groupings within the network. The three strands are:

ONE: strategies for organisational change and development

TWO: strategies to achieve equality of opportunity for individuals from minority ethnic communities

THREE: community development/capacity building.

STRAND ONE: Strategies for organisational change and development

The overall aim under Strand One would be to highlight good practice and organisational “repositioning” in order to ensure that public service organisations (including NGOs) work collaboratively together to develop holistic strategies which address, express and identify needs of minority ethnic communities.

Initial areas of focus could include:

- anti-discriminatory training for managers and front line staff
- strategies to improve access for specific targeted groups eg young unemployed, single parents
- models for effective consultation and participation by and with minority ethnic communities
- race equality policies as part of the personnel practices of such organisations
- developing more effective marketing provision through use of multi-media techniques.

STRAND TWO: Strategies to achieve equality of opportunity for individuals from minority ethnic communities

The overall aim under Strand Two would be to highlight specific initiatives being developed in member states which address particular needs of certain groups within the minority ethnic communities. (eg older migrants, migrant women, youth unemployment, cultural industries).

Initial areas of focus could include:

- guidance and counselling strategies
- vocational training
- language and social skills training
- developing traineeships in areas of governmental and non-governmental employment where ethnic and migrant communities are under-represented
- development of cultural diversity and expression
- developing routes for the accreditation of prior learning
- developing systems for the recognition of qualifications gained in non-EU countries.

STRAND THREE: Community development/capacity building

The overall aim under Strand Three would be to highlight good practice and develop curriculum resources which would enable and empower minority ethnic organisations to become more effective and thus enable them to participate in the planning, development and delivery of Adult Education and Training provision.

Initial areas of focus could include:

- management and organisational skills training
- urban regeneration and community development
- funding strategies
- models for effective self organisation.



- 4.5** The Network would seek to establish a series of study seminars for relevant participants around some of the above themes. The end result would be to exchange practice, disseminate information and produce guidelines for more effective service delivery.

- in developing such a programme the network would overall seek to highlight issues/strategies which address racism, social exclusion and promotion of integration.

Addressing needs

- 4.6** As such the proposed "Learning to Live in a Multi-Cultural Society: Adult Education and Training Network" will be addressing needs which have been expressed in several key documents.

- The EC White Paper, *European Social Policy: A way forward for the Union*, highlights the need to ensure that the issue of Social Exclusion is effectively addressed. It states "the marginalisation of major social groups is a challenge to the social cohesion of the Union and calls for a mobilisation of efforts by Member States and all the parties concerned... It is clear that contemporary economic and social conditions tend to exclude some groups from the cycle of opportunities... This is not just a question of social justice; the Union simply cannot afford to lose the contribution of marginalised groups to society as a whole." (Page 49: paragraphs 11 and 12)
- The Presidency Conclusions of the European Council meeting on 9 and 10 December 1994 in Essen emphasises the great importance of the "Union-wide fight against racism and xenophobia for the preservation of human dignity and the peaceful co-existence of all citizens in the European Union." (Page 22)
- Furthermore the statement identifies education and training as areas for elaboration as part of developing an overall Union strategy against racism and xenophobia.
- The EC White Paper, *Growth, competitiveness and employment* echoes this acknowledgement of education and training being strategically important for the emergence of a new model of economic and social development.
- Similarly, the EC proposal for establishing 1996 as the "European Year of Life Long Learning" stressed the importance of improving equality in opportunities in access to education and training.
- Finally, the Proposal for a Council decision designating 1997 as the European Year against racism and xenophobia presents the ideal setting for promoting these ideas.

The Adult Education Organisations and their Networks, supported by the work of the Council of Europe, the European Commission (DGXXII and DGV) and the European Association for the Education of Adults, are ideally placed to take this work forward.

Part Three

Home-school liaison: European perspectives and case studies

The attempt to reflect schooling practices within an international context on a European level presupposes that sight is not lost of the differences in the structures and the experience in the individual countries. In order to grasp the meaning of single projects and practices within their own context, it is essential to know the fundamental structural differences.

In regard to the reality of the schooling practices treated here, it is significant that in France and in the UK whole-day schools convey to the scholars a quite different relationship towards the school as a place of learning from that of, for example, Germany, where children (6 to 18 years of age – ordinary and secondary level) normally have half-day schooling, i.e. 6-7 hours daily. This has a substantial effect on the role played by mothers who to a much lesser extent go out to work (EU figures).

1. The UK

An overview of the UK experience of home-school liaison

Summary of a presentation made by Professor Sally Tomlinson, Goldsmiths' College, University of London

Those parents who migrated into Britain from the Caribbean, the Indian Sub-Continent, East and West Africa and Hong Kong had been educated in colonies in which education promised power and money, and they had high expectations of the education systems their children were entering. Research from the 1960s consistently demonstrated that schools and their children's education were a matter of great concern to ethnic minority parents. Most migrant parents did not enhance their own levels of qualifications or skills by migration but were eager for their children to benefit from education and obtain good qualifications and employment. While they did not necessarily aspire for their children to be professionals, they did expect them to be given the means to be occupationally secure.

Mismatch

There has, however, been a mismatch of expectations between what ethnic minority parents expected of education, and what teachers felt they could offer. During the 1970s, ethnic minority parents became increasingly anxious that schools should equip their children with skills and credentials to compete with

white pupils and the issue of achievement became a dominant concern, particularly for Caribbean parents, whose children were consistently regarded as likely to be low achievers. Ethnic minority parents also expressed their desires that their backgrounds and cultures be respected and minority ethnic cultures taken seriously in schools.

This mismatch of expectations relates to a number of factors:

- ethnic minority children usually entered the urban schools which were not equipped to prepare pupils for higher level academic work or technical work
- teacher expectations of pupils whose backgrounds, cultures and languages they did not understand have been consistently low, and this has persisted as the generation of British-born young ethnic minority pupils have entered schools
- teachers have always had difficulty in communicating with ethnic minority parents.

By the early 1980s ethnic minority home and school relations were in a critical period. The Rampton Committee of enquiry into the education of ethnic minority children wrote in its interim report that a "gulf of mistrust and misunderstanding" appeared to be growing between schools and parents, and parents had lost faith in schools to make improvements (Rampton Report 1981). Some parents' groups were suggesting short-term segregated schooling and a black supplementary school movement began to flourish in the U.K.

Teachers

Teachers, in spite of examples of innovation in some urban areas and some improvement in teacher education and training courses, continued to have difficulty in informing themselves about the lives and backgrounds of ethnic minority parents and continued to resort to stereotypical beliefs about ethnic minority homes. From the 1960s onwards much literature produced by ethnic minorities was simplistic and patronising and often took a static view of culture – customs and traditions brought by migrants were assumed to be unchanging, and dress, diet, religion and language became problems to be resolved rather than attributes to be respected.

Most teachers in urban schools do not, in any case, live among their pupils and those "white" schools still obtain much of their information about ethnic minorities from the media. Even teachers in multi-racial schools receive little guidance on contact and communication with ethnic minority parents and this encourages a stereotyping of the parents which it is not easy to eradicate. One stereotypical belief which persists is that ethnic minority parents are "just like" white working class parents apart from colour and customs. This can create a double disadvantage for ethnic minority parents as there is a well-documented history of negative teacher stereotyping of working class parents, and many teachers have come to believe that school influences are minimal when set against perceived disadvantages of a working class and ethnic minority background.

Research in the 1980s and 1990s has continued to demonstrate that stereotyped ideas of ethnic minority families and communities continue to be held and can prevent genuine contact between homes and schools.

One reason for the continued willingness to stereotype ethnic minority communities and parents is that there has been, over the past 30 years, an enduring commitment in education to assimilationist views, overlaid more recently by nationalist beliefs which attempt to exclude ethnic minorities from being part of a "British national identity." During the 1960s the idea that minorities should forget their own languages and cultures and assimilate into the majority society seemed right and proper to many teachers. This notion tied in with liberal views that in order to provide equal opportunities all children should be treated as if they were "the same." However, the assimilationist beliefs rapidly became a way of absolving teachers from learning about the backgrounds and lives of ethnic minorities or making educational changes and adaptations.

Assimilation

Assimilation is an impossible goal for ethnic minorities. On the one hand, they are urged that the most appropriate way for them to achieve equality of opportunity and acceptance into the nation is to give up adherence to cultures, languages, customs and values, and regard themselves as "British." But at the same time the white majority -which includes parents and teachers - remains hostile to ethnic minorities and denies them entry into the idea of the "nation". Assimilation is therefore impossible in a society in which the majority culture includes political and cultural beliefs in white superiority and condones racial discrimination, harassment and cultural ignorance.

Case studies from the UK

Avon County Council Home-School Liaison Team

Avon Section 11 Team, Bristol. Presentation made by Lois Frances and Raj Kochar, Home-School Liaison Teachers

Our task in school is to work towards raising the educational achievement of African/Caribbean and Asian pupils. Most of our time is spent teaching in the classroom but a small proportion of time (3/10ths) has been allocated for home-school liaison.

Our work is in two main areas:

- encouraging parental involvement in school activities
- working in collaboration with the school to enable parents of African Caribbean pupils to participate in the education and development of their children.

Parental involvement

Encouraging parental involvement in school activities is done in a number of ways:

- helping parents to be aware of the value of parents' meetings and workshops and encouraging their attendance of these
- stressing to parents the importance of being in regular contact with their children's teachers and their classroom; pointing out the benefits this has for their children in that it helps them to develop positive attitudes to education.

It also shows the classroom teacher that as parents they are interested in their children's education. Parents are therefore encouraged to make regular visits to school

- encouraging parents to share their skills/expertise with the school for example by participating in classroom activities such as reading, projects, music and cooking
- working with school/parents to develop action plans designed to improve behaviour and achievement where there are behavioural problems
- ensuring that, where parental involvement takes place in the classroom, we work with classroom teachers to plan ways in which this can effectively take place.

Collaboration with schools

Working in collaboration with the schools helps them to implement strategies whereby parents of African Caribbean pupils can participate in the education and development of their children through home-based activities. The rationale for undertaking this are as follows:

- it reinforces the fact that parents are partners with schools in the education of their children and assists pupils to become more aware that home and school are working together to ensure their progress
- it helps parents to be more aware of what is expected of their children and gives them the opportunity to see the kind of progress their children are making
- most African/Caribbean parents want their children to succeed and are willing to give whatever support is needed at home to enable this to happen. At the same time some parents would like to support their children but are unsure of how to do so
- pupils who are weak in certain academic areas can improve through extra practice at home and can therefore function more confidently in the classroom. With this confidence, pupils are often better motivated
- it develops a good rapport between home and school.

Home-based activities are organised in conjunction with classroom teachers. Pupils' needs are identified and a decision made on the kinds of activities that the pupil would benefit from in practising. The activities are monitored by the classroom teacher and ourselves and changes made when/where it is necessary.

To set up the activities a meeting is convened with parent/carer of the individual pupil at home or at school. The parent is shown an example of the work the pupil would be doing as suggestions are made on how best to support the pupil. Parents are encouraged to ensure that the work is done and returned on agreed days. Where the work is not returned regularly and the quality of the work is below expectation, parents are re-visited to encourage improvement. The work is reviewed every term.

Home-based activities cover a variety of areas eg concentration, activities, language activities, mathematics, promoting self-esteem – here parents are encouraged to share aspects of their own culture with their children and a home reading project which provides Asian, African/Caribbean literature.

Evaluation

The approach outlined above has achieved certain positive outcomes:

- the link between home and school has been strengthened; in some cases misunderstandings between home and school have been resolved due to the fact that as home-school liaison teachers we have been able to draw on our knowledge and experience of the parent's own culture/background
- attendance of parents meetings have improved, particularly amongst Asian parents. This is a direct result of the fact that bilingual teachers are available in the schools
- some parents have become more confident and more articulate eg we now have two Asian parents who have become governors (a body of people, made up of local authority representatives, teacher governors and parent governors) and one African Caribbean parent showing interest, and as a result of the provision of information and guidance, another two Asian parents have joined Access courses
- more parents have become aware of their rights and responsibilities in ways of supporting their children
- where parents have begun to visit the school or their child's classrooms more regularly, the pupil's morale has been boosted and a marked improvement has been in the attitude of some pupils, particularly those with behavioural problems
- parents have made successful contributions to school projects. Support and guidance from home-school liaison teachers have helped in making this possible
- school absences have been reduced and the pupil's performance has improved as parent and teachers have worked together in specific areas of the curriculum in which the pupils are struggling.

Generally parents welcome our visits and usually respond positively to requests to support their children at home.

Difficulties

The difficulty we encounter is that of increasing the number of ethnic minority parents who participate positively in their children's education, particularly in trying to tackle the problem of non-attendance at meetings. Currently, we are undertaking a survey amongst African/Caribbean parents with regard to attendance at weekly parent meetings in one school. The result will help to inform us of the reasons for non-attendance and will probably be useful in providing information for non-attenders at other meetings.

We have also found that there is a reluctance among our parents to become involved in decision-making in the school eg by becoming parent governors. This seems to stem from a lack of confidence and related language needs. These needs are met in some schools by regular parent workshops.

Recently through the Community Education Department we have embarked on a project in a number of schools aimed at equipping and empowering parents to be more confident and competent in supporting their children. The aims of the project are to:

- provide activities which arrange awareness of what is available in the community eg Access courses and other adult education courses
- empower parents to develop their organisational skills so that they can participate actively in their children's education and enable them to provide effective support and collaboration with class teachers
- make parents aware of their basic rights in relation to factors such as immigration, British law and social benefits
- develop parents' confidence and awareness of how to benefit from the system in order to improve the quality of life for them and their children.

Conclusion

There is still much work to be done in this area and it is difficult to judge what has truly been achieved. The evidence shows, however, that the work carried out in this area so far has benefited pupils, parents and schools.

Avon County Council Home-School Liaison Team

*Black Parent Governor Support Group – Bristol. A presentation by
Enid Smith and Kamaljit Poonia – Avon County Council*

When looking at developing strategies to combat discrimination and xenophobia in our different countries, an important area to address is empowering black and other ethnic minority parents to be able to participate actively in the education of their children.

Education, most people will agree, is one of the most important areas in shaping the future of black children. A good education will help black children to access better employment opportunities and other spheres of life, perhaps different from the types of opportunities their parents have had.

Educationalists have repeatedly stated that good education involves a partnership between parents and education centres. This has in the past been highlighted as a point of good practice, particularly when dealing with racism in schools.

The British experience has shown that links between black parents and schools, has on the whole, been limited. This has been for a whole range of reasons: perhaps the parents cannot speak English, or find that the school is too unwelcoming and does not reflect a multi-cultural image; or black parents may find that their concerns are not taken seriously by the school and are therefore marginalised. Black parents need to be empowered in order to participate fully in the education system.

Self-organisation

One way of doing this is to facilitate a process whereby black parents can develop their skills and share their concerns in a safe environment. Facilitating self-organisation is one way of doing this. Many black parents who have taken steps to participate in the education system, have often felt alienated, isolated and marginalised. Underpinning this is the fact that parents often feel that their real concerns are not being taken on board, particularly, if they want to raise issues around equal opportunities.

In Britain, parental involvement has become vital because of recent changes in legislation. The 1986 and 1988 Education Acts have, in effect, increased the powers and duties of school governors. The governing bodies of schools now have responsibility for managing the budgets of schools as well as greater control over developing and implementing policies. Governors also have responsibility for employing teachers for their schools. Research both nationally and locally has shown that black governors are under-represented on governing bodies. This means that black parents are less likely to be able to influence the way a school is run.

Participation

In this context, parental involvement in the schools their children attend is not only good practice but is also a necessity. For black parents there are a number of issues that have to be addressed if we are to increase their participation, either as governors or generally in the education system.

Locally, we have looked at what barriers prevent black people from participating, and what stops them from becoming governors. On the whole the reasons mentioned above were reiterated. Parents felt that governing bodies were often controlled by white, middle class people who may not be in touch with their concerns. Also, in order to participate parents had to be enabled to do this. The governor training available at the moment did not address their needs and the need for tailor-made governor packages was highlighted.

The black parents and governors support group was established as a direct response to legislative changes that have taken place. This group is managed by an all-black management committee. Its aims and objectives are to provide an arena for encouraging greater participation in mainstream education services by black parents and black governors and other black people interested in furthering the education of black children by:

- providing support to each other
- encouraging black people to become school governors
- providing information and raising awareness on educational legislation and issues
- acting as a consultative forum on educational issues.

Training needs

A main part of their work has been to look at the educational and training needs of black parents. Consultation with the communities revealed that what many parents were asking for was what could be termed 'pre-governor training'. People wanted to know what they were letting themselves in for. Often parents felt disempowered because they did not have enough information in order to make informed decisions. The group is currently in dialogue with the local authority about this issue and are in partnership with them in developing appropriate training packages. The group will also provide an avenue through which this training can be delivered.

The group, because it is closer to the community and involves the community in its work, is able to overcome some of the barriers that may prevent black people from considering taking that initial step towards participation.

The group also provides a supportive environment whereby people can discuss their needs, and then be in a position to articulate them collectively. Joining their voices together gives them more power, so that they can have greater influence over educational structures.

Continuing support

The group has also found that once people do become governors they need continuing support. Because of the under-representation of black governors on governing bodies they are often the only black person on the committee and because of this they often face certain difficulties. They may be seen as the token black person, or someone who will always speak on behalf of their community, or they may be the only one who raises issues of equal opportunities on their governing body, allowing their white colleagues to relinquish responsibility for these important issues.

The group provides continuing support for parents and sees its role as facilitating a process. The issue of black parent involvement is an ongoing one and the group can act as an interface between educational establishments, whether they are schools, the local authority or colleges. The training and educational needs of black parents can be assessed more clearly and articulated to institutions so that these needs can be met. Indeed, lobbying and pressure can be put on organisations if they are unwilling to address black parents' needs.

A major issue that the group has lobbied on is the higher rates of exclusions from schools for black children. Senior Education Officers were invited to a public meeting with parents, to raise concerns and look at a way forward for addressing this issue.

Recently the work of the group has moved more forward providing advocacy for parents who are in dialogue with schools over their children's education. Often this situation arises when children have been excluded.

In summary, the empowerment of black parents is essential if we are serious about their participation, and are to move away from a paternalistic approach. By supporting the self-organisation of black parents, through resource allocation and other types of support, we can begin to move towards a position where by black parents needs are addressed in a more holistic way, and that they are enabled to become more active and effective.

2. France

An overview of the French experience of home-school liaison

Summary of a presentation made by Françoise Thorin, Centre de Ressources et d'Initiatives pour l'International

In order to understand French policy in respect of the home-school relationship it is first necessary to outline the French integration policy, which is founded on the individual equality of rights, and not on the recognition of ethnic minorities. It is defined as follows by the Ministry of Population and Migration:

"Leading an integration policy is developing actions which tend to maintain its cohesion with society, in its local and national fabric, that is to say, very simply, to allow each one to live peacefully and normally, being on neighbourly terms with each other, within the respect of laws and the exercising of rights."

"Thus defined, integration is a simple thing, without militant or missionary pretention, which supposes neither keeping a collective identity the word 'insertion' implies, nor losing an individual history through an assimilation imposed from the outside. On the contrary, the word 'living' refers to dynamics and changes through time in the lives of individuals and their families. Finally, speaking either of the cohesion of the social fabric or of respecting laws and exercising rights is referring to what constitutes the French system, that is to say its founding republican values that each person living in France must accept." (Quelle pratique d'integration? Gerald Moreau, Head of Populations and Migrations, Ministry of Social Affairs, *Revue Française des Affaires Sociales*, December 1992.)

The role of school

School has an essential part to play in this integration policy. For the past 20 years the measures taken by the Ministry of Education towards immigration have been of three types:

- learning the French language: this means allowing to master French as a rapid integration means for foreign children in a school environment
- cultural enrichment, particularly by teaching original languages and cultures, by creating training and information centres and by sending immigrants' children to school
- the possibility of success for all children: in order to reach this goal, there have been attempts to build an enlarged educational community in the Priority Education Zones and to develop school accompaniment remedial courses for lessons and homework, involvement of schools into extra-curricular educational activities.

Within this framework, a number of initiatives/projects are relevant to the theme of home-school liaison.

Literacy courses for women who have arrived in the Rouen suburbs

In Saint-Etienne de Rouvray in the Rouen suburbs, 50 foreign families settle every year within the framework of family reunion. Husbands who have been living in France for a long time often work in Paris. So women must face situations new to them: organising the shopping, housing, communication with school, having the family support medical expenses.

For several years GRETA Rouen Sud has been setting up courses allowing easier family insertion by offering literacy courses to women who have just arrived.

Several associations (Parent Child Association, Education Association, etc.) play the role of interface between the Robespierre middle school regarding questions relating to children's education and what they have contributed to make the literacy courses known. This work is recognised as contributing to changing the way relations develop between school, its staff and the children's parents in creating new positive links for the neighbourhood's balance and its everyday life.

This training aims at helping women to communicate in French, in oral and written form, to be self-confident in their new environment, to be familiar with habitats and customs in their country of arrival and to know the local organisations and the way they function in order for them to gain autonomy.

Today, based on local partnership work with Parents Associations, the Education Department, the Municipality, the Social Service, the Police and other intermediaries, GRETA Rouen Sud offers to enlarge the scheme to more diversified audiences by creating a permanent and individualised basic training scheme.

Literacy training for women in a Paris neighbourhood

GRETA Rouen Sud has a training branch for migrants in Paris and provides, in an area inhabited by many immigrants, literacy training for women. The scheme's philosophy is based on the idea that to make integration easier, the family unit must be taken into account - the father, the mother, the child - and the course's contents, both for children and adults, must evolve.

The project started from a training course for women mostly coming from the Maghreb. One of the objectives was to make them understand school and to make them familiar with basic French customs in order to avoid children being rejected at school. Another objective was to show how school life and womens' roles evolve in the country of arrival. In order to update the contents of this literacy course, Greta obtained financing to produce teaching texts, using such materials as kindergarten stories, tales and the fables.

Keeping in touch with early training has involved visits to schools and advising primary school teachers on materials for training mothers in the alphabet. Even in this vital preliminary stage of education, it is not easy to make progress. The most difficult problem remains that of getting in touch with the fathers of families.

Family unit for extra-curricular activities in Montreuil

The Association Maroccans in France has carried out work in two primary schools in Montreuil (a suburb of Paris) to help children with difficulties at school. Their main activities consisted in attending parents evenings, meeting teachers and the headteacher, individually evaluating children having difficulties, having individual interviews with their parents.

The greatest difficulty was to focus their action and limit themselves to helping children with problems in concentrating at school, organising their homework, getting involved, becoming motivated and overcoming language problems. This work also aims to help parents and children to have closer relationships. One way of doing this has been through family units.

Key points

A number of key points/issues arise from the French experience:

- starting from the French integration model founded on individual equality (and not on the recognition of ethnic minorities), we can reflect on the 'positive discrimination' set up from school to favour the integration of migrant children and their families: it is clearly obvious that, in this context, measures should not only be taken to help migrant people. In other words, measures should address the needs of all disadvantaged social/economic groups.
- how can we bring closer the children's and families' social and cultural universes on the one hand, and, on the other hand, teaching teams, school administrative/service staff, elected, administrative people and social workers who have to deal with school problems? What partnerships can be forged?
- how can youngsters and their families be better known through school work?
- how can we restore parents' trust in teachers when parents have economic and family problems?
- we need to look for synergy in parents' and children's training – father, mother, children – through training courses set up for different audiences: salaried employees, the unemployed, single parents, literacy for mothers, training for youngsters from 16 to 25, and so on.
- the role of children's and adults' training within the policy of the city or the development of underprivileged neighbourhoods needs to be recognised.
- the training of teaching staff needs to be addressed in making the numerous departments involved aware of this important issue.



3. Germany

An overview of the German experience of home-school liaison

Summary of a presentation made by Uli Bechmann of FOKUS GmbH

In comparison with all other EC countries, a special feature for Germany is that the proportion of foreigners is particularly high at almost 6 per cent. In all other EC countries this percentage is less than 4 per cent. Foreigners living in Germany only exceptionally come from Asian or African countries. Eighty-two per cent come from other European countries. By far the largest group – more than 1.9 million – is formed by migrants of Turkish nationality.

Until 1973 there were bilateral treaties between Germany and many Mediterranean countries for the hiring of foreign workers. After 1973, however, foreigners from non-EC countries were allowed to enter Germany only as tourists, political refugees or members of families that wished to be reunited. Between 1975 and 1989 about four to five million foreigners lived in the Federal Republic of Germany. Since 1990 the number of migrants has been increasing steadily. Today almost 7 million foreigners live in Germany, most of them in the Western part.

Figure 1 Countries of origin of foreigners living in Germany
Foreigners in thousands (> 60,000) in 1993

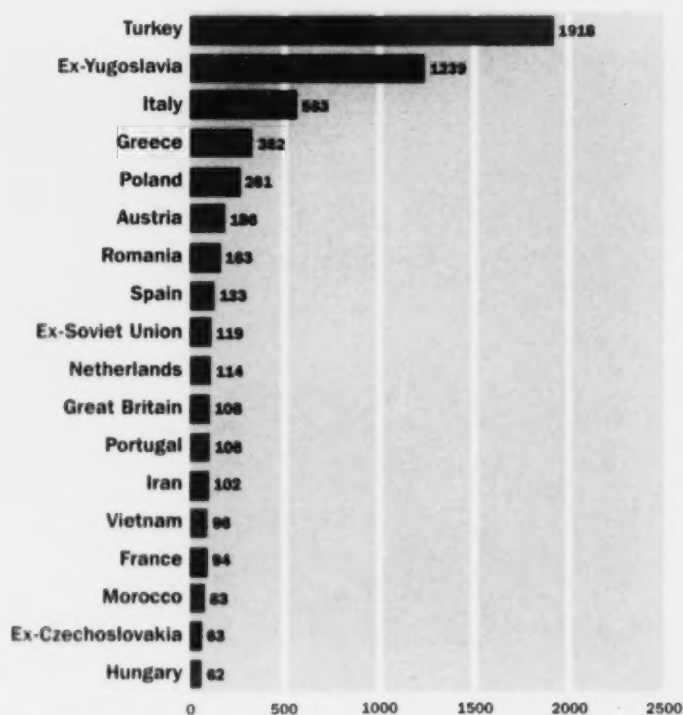
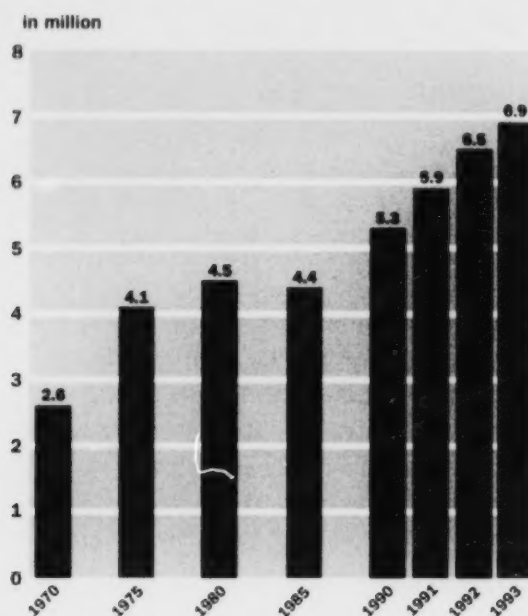
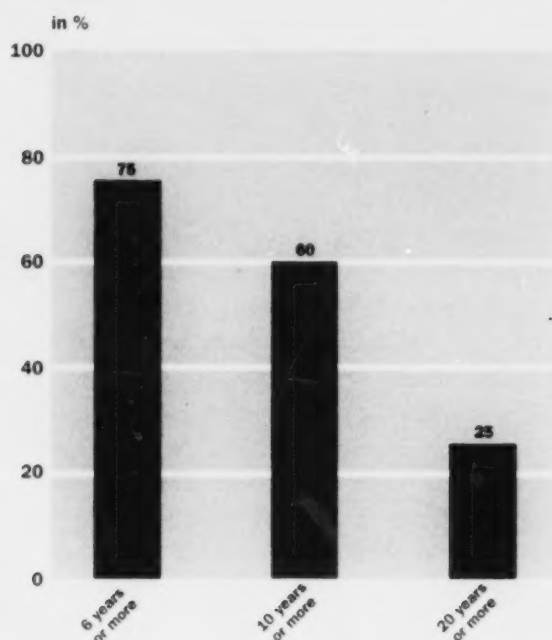


Figure 2 Numbers of foreigners in Germany during the period 1970 to 1993



Most migrants have been living and working in Germany for ten years or longer, 25 per cent of them have been in Germany for twenty years or longer.

Figure 3 Duration of stay of foreigners



80 per cent of young foreigners are born in Germany!

There are considerable migratory movements between Germany and other countries. From 1990 to 1994 between 900,000 and 1.2 million foreigners were new arrivals every year, but about half this number left Germany after the same period of time.

Unification

The German Unification has entailed changes that have led to considerable insecurity feeling amongst certain sections of the population. Even before the fall of the Berlin Wall there were unmistakable signs of hostility and discrimination against foreigners; since then the situation has clearly deteriorated.

Since the Autumn of 1991, there have been violent assaults on foreign nationals and arson attacks against institutions or homes accommodating foreigners. In the beginning these attacks were on asylum-seekers but soon they were also levelled against foreigners who had been living in the country for a long time. Sad notoriety has been acquired by such names as Hoyerswerda, Hunxe, Rostock, Molln and Solingen.

In the former Federal Republic of Germany the percentage of foreigners varies between 5 and 10 per cent among the different federal states, with most of the foreigners living in the big cities in the metropolitan areas, for example, in the Ruhr area, the Rhein-Main agglomeration around Frankfurt and areas around Stuttgart and Munich. In comparing the big cities more closely, we notice marked differences between them.

Among the four cities with more than one million inhabitants, Munich has more than twice as many foreigners than Berlin. However, if you come to the district of Kreuzberg in Berlin, it strikes you that more than 50 per cent of its inhabitants are foreigners, mainly Turks. Turks themselves have called Kreuzberg the third biggest Turkish city in the world. In Munich the situation is quite different. Besides a large Turkish community there are substantial groups of Italians and former Yugoslavs. It should be noted that the cities with the least percentage of foreigners, such as Leipzig, are situated without exception in the former German Democratic Republic. Far fewer foreigners live in the rural areas.

What is surprising, however, is that in many studies the hostility against foreigners in the East has been rated more acute than in the West. Obviously the strain on the East German population was much too heavy when the German government demanded that they should provide accommodation for asylum-seekers.

The problem of integrating those foreigners, formerly called 'guest workers', however, only exists in the West. In the Eastern part of Germany only a few 'Vertragsarbeiter contract workers' remain who originally came from Vietnam and some African countries. They originally had expected to stay for a limited time. In the meantime, however, it is a fact that the majority want to stay, to live and work in Germany, to take part in social and political life.

Generations

With regards to 'guest workers' we distinguish between members of the first, second and third generations. 'Foreigners' of the first generation came to Germany till recruitment stopped in 1973. They hold on to traditional values, very often they are not fluent in German even after many years. Members of the second generation often came to Germany after attending school in the country of origin for some years. Living in Germany for them means to live between two worlds: "Germany in the daytime – Turkey in the evening." This situation is difficult for females particularly in traditional families. Members of the third generation, however, are born and socialised in Germany, they speak German fluently but often not their parents' tongue. They are considered as 'natives' with a foreign passport.

Refugees emigrated on grounds of other regulations as asylum seekers or as boat people. In Germany the procedure of granting political asylum usually takes a long time, and asylum was granted only to between 5 to 10 per cent by the lower courts in recent years. It is striking that almost 50 per cent of all refugees in the past four years have come from the former Yugoslavia and Romania. A section of these refugees are gypsies, i.e. Sinti and Roma, who are considered as difficult to live with by many Germans.

Asylum-seekers

With regard to asylum-seekers we have to take into consideration that between 1991 and 1992 their number increased tremendously from 256,000 to 438,000 which led to new regulations concerning the asylum procedure. Some half a million asylum seekers are permitted to stay in Germany in accordance with the Geneva Convention, because they are recognised as *de facto* refugees.

Within the framework of asylum policies, legislation was changed significantly by Parliament. Today, asylum status is denied to refugees entering Germany via politically safe countries.

Repatriates

A special group of migrants are repatriates. From 1950, altogether 3,000,000 of them came to Germany, one million after 1990. With regards to the origin of repatriates, once again, changes have taken place. Whereas up to 1989 most repatriates came from Poland, from 1990 many of them come from the former Soviet States particularly from Kazakstan. Whereas the older generation were relatively fluent in German, young people hardly speak any. Because of their inability to speak German and because of their cultural differences they are normally perceived as non-Germans by the Germans.

Case study: Regional support centres to migrant children and youth

Since 1980 the federal state of North Rhine Westphalia (NRW) has established sixteen educational centres which are called RAA (Regionale Arbeitsstellen zur Förderung ausländischer Kinder und Jugendlicher in Nordrhein-

Westfalen/Regional Support Centres to Foreign Children and Youth). So far they have been established mainly in the Ruhr district where the percentage of foreigners is particularly high. Being financed by the Department of Education and by the Department of Social Affairs means that both school teachers and Social Workers cooperate in order to achieve the same goals. Each Centre is meant to be an office for liaison and co-ordination between parents and the authorities, between foreigners and natives, between theory and practice.

Since 1988 there has been one central office, which among other things, publishes a national magazine called 'Gemeinsam' ('Together'). The work of the RAAs follows four basic principles:

1. working with parents
2. career counselling
3. intercultural education
4. community education.

Above all, the RAAs try to facilitate the transition from one period of learning and living to another, i.e. from pre-school to the elementary school, from elementary to secondary, from school to occupational training. In all these processes parents and other family members have to participate in the decision-making.

Intercultural education

The RAA Centres understand intercultural education as a learning process in which many participate, i.e. pupils, teachers, parents both foreign and native. To that end the RAAs adopt a community education approach to service delivery. This means that:

- education at school must be based on the cultural experiences of the children
- school must not only take place in the morning but also offer programmes in the afternoon and evening, i.e. continuing education for adults and leisure time activities for children and adolescents
- clubs, societies, industrial firms and enterprises must be involved in such educational processes
- the private sector must be induced to enter into partnerships with educational institutions.

Case study: Anti-racism programme of the regional support centre of migrant children and youth

Presentation by Barbel Kampmann

There are three phases in the Anti-Racist Programme used in the RAA:

- awareness creation
- sensitisation
- anti-racist action.

Awareness creation

This means to understand racism in its functions, and its historical context. This process should be developed on a cognitive as well as emotional level (by

practical exercise and role play) and has to consist of a discussion of one's own racist views/thoughts.

Sensitisation

This phase is primarily left to each participant and cannot be influenced. People who have undergone phase one will automatically be more sensitive as far as racism is concerned. Suddenly, language and stereotypes will be able to be perceived in a different manner and hidden racism will be discovered. This will occur simultaneously during the phase of questioning and demand for more information.

Anti-racist action

After having gone through phases one and two, participants will develop their own view points for anti-racist work. This involves developing anti-racist programmes in which the following elements have to be defined:

- the content aims and possibilities to control the achievement of goals
- the target group
- the place for action
- the probable duration of the programme
- the organisational framework.

Framework

Within this overall framework, the RAAs have developed work programmes in respect of anti-racist training which have the following modular elements. Each of these elements (except 'getting to know each other') can be used independently. The modules consist of the following:

- **Getting to know each other**

According to age of the group, role plays and exercises are developed to get acquainted and either used with the aim of identifying expectations and anxiety before entering the full programme.

- **The history of racism**

By enacting a play based on the conquest of Africa the historical context appears

- **What is racism?**

This exercise involves the assigning of prefabricated characteristics to biological specifications.

- **Racist socialisation**

This consists of an exercise in which statements are provided which demonstrate the depth of racist socialisation.

- **Segregation – How does the victim feel?**

This exercise is designed to simulate the experience of social exclusion. Criteria are enumerated - those to whom they will apply have to stand up in silence, turn into one corner of the room and stand there for a few minutes silently.

- **How does racism function?**

This involves role play about how to solve a social problem. Starting point for

this play is the dissatisfaction of people, especially youth about their own living situation, unemployment and increasing poverty. Politicians and business people fear protests, violence and loss of consensus of voters. Politicians and entrepreneurs sit together to find a solution to the situation. All players will have role cards.

The end result of using these various modules will be to enable participants to recognise a distinction between facts and reality that foreigners experience in Germany. This will undoubtedly provoke an intensive debate revealing responsibilities and interrelationships.

Case study: Under-achievement and social exclusion of ethnic minority children – school policy in Bavaria

Summary of a presentation made by Dr. Johanna Vogel – Principal, Volkshochschule, Munich, Bavaria

All school statistics verify emphatically that foreign children are disadvantaged in the German school system. The figures from Munich illustrate this.

On 31 December 1993 Munich had 1.3 million inhabitants of which 275,000 were foreigners, i.e. citizens of non-German nationality. With a proportion of 21 per cent of the total population and 23 per cent for school children in primary school, only just under 10 per cent of pupils at Grammar School are of non-German origin. However in the upper forms of German Hauptschule (Secondary General School) the number rises up to 55 per cent.

Thirty-three per cent of children at Special Schools (for pupils with learning difficulties) are foreigners. Only in the Realschulen (Intermediary Schools) are foreign pupils – almost 30 per cent – over-represented. It means that many foreign pupils with very good learning achievements have to leave High Schools and achieve a lesser school leaving certificate, instead of striving for the Abitur (equivalent to A-Levels).

Public funds

In cities such as Munich, different measures financed with public funds have existed for many years to promote the gradual elimination of discrimination against foreign children and young people, in order to integrate them into the German working world. These programmes, which are mostly orientated towards the needs of the German job and apprenticeship market, have in the last ten years produced a distinct improvement in the situation of young foreigners in the sphere of training and education.

Over and above that, there are also a whole range of types of schools whose stated aim is the better promotion of foreign children in the German school system. This is illustrated by using the example of the school policy in Bavaria relating to foreign children.

Exclusion

In Bavaria, the Federal state has over a period of many years supported a concept of providing schooling facilities for foreign children which led in practice to their exclusion from the German schools, at least in the conurbation areas of the larger towns.

Foreign children were taught in so called *native language classes* by teachers from their country of origin and received German as a foreign language. By providing this type of schooling facility their cultural identity was to be kept preserved. In fact the academic level of these children, even when they were able to leave German Hauptschule (Secondary General School) with a school leaving certificate, was so much lower than that of the Germans, that they were frequently unable to compete in the German training market, and had to be further provided with schooling facilities for at least another year. Meanwhile it is now apparent that these native language classes did not really help Turkish children to progress in Turkey in order to make it easier once the family had returned there. The Bavarian Government now supports schools in Turkey, which should make the reintegration of these children easier.

Nationalistic interests

Meanwhile, these *native language classes* have been disbanded. So-called bilingual classes took their place, in which the children are taught for approximately 50 per cent of the time by mother tongue teachers and for a further 50 per cent by German teachers. These bilingual classes do not abolish the fundamental discrimination of foreign children in the German school system; they only perpetuate it. The abolition once and for all of this type of school in particular for Turkish children fails amongst other things because of pressure from the Turks and their own nationalistic interests.

Foreign children, who have grown up here, can basically go directly into the German Regelschule (practically-based Secondary Level School). In contrast to other federal states, however, they receive no additional tuition in their own native language – which makes it difficult for Turkish parents to decide in favour of this type of schooling provision for their children.

Transitional classes

Further models for the promotion for foreign children are *transitional classes* for newly arrived children. Over one or two years, these children are assisted, in particular, in the German language. The aim of these support classes, which are basically multi-national classes, is the future integration of the children into the German school system. According to my observation, these support classes are so far the most successful school model for foreign children entering the country at a later age. However, the length of training for the children is for this reason extended in each case by one to two years.

For refugee children from the former Yugoslavia, there have been separate support classes for one to two years, in which the children are taught amongst themselves and by mother tongue teachers, who usually are also living in Munich as refugees. These classes are a worse re-introduction of the former

native language classes. The central thinking is that these children should be educated for returning home soon. The children only have one hour of German tuition a day. Their integration into the German school system is expressly not desired.

Key requirements

The experience of the initiatives outlined above demonstrates the following key requirements which must be fulfilled if equality of opportunity for foreign children is to be adequately addressed:

- sufficient nursery places must be made available for foreign children. This is the only way for many of them to learn German as a second language through play, and to develop themselves through meeting and playing with German children on equal terms.
- enough places in so called Tagesheimschulen (all day schools) must be made available for foreign school children.
- the native language for foreign children must be recognised in the German school system. Only when the 'guest worker languages' such as Greek, Turkish and Serbo-Croat are taught and examined as elective or compulsory subjects for German pupils as well as English and French, can genuine equality of opportunity for foreign school children be talked of.
- the lifestyle and culture of origin of the different groups of 'guest workers' must be sufficiently treated in school books and teaching materials, so that prejudices amongst German children towards foreign children are broken down or rather never arise in the first place.

Case study: Intercultural education in vocational training

*Summary of a presentation made by Petra Szablewski-Cavus,
German Institute for Adult Education*

Note: Whilst this case study doesn't specifically address the issue of home-school liaison, it does however identify some general lessons which are pertinent to this interface.

The German Institute for Adult Education of the German Adult Education Association is a research institute which is concerned with the development of adult education and which provides a bridge between the theory and practice of adult education.

Learning in life

Since the mid-1970s, the Institute has been concerned with projects contributing to the improvement for migrants' learning in life conditions in Germany, for example:

- projects dealing with the development of didactic models to further migrants' second language learning
- projects encouraging migrants to take school leaving examinations later
- projects which aim to design a training programme for the educational staff in migrants' post-compulsory courses.

Migrant Workers' Vocational Qualification

The objectives of the current project, which the Institute is engaged in, are concerned with the development and evaluation of a concept for a migrant workers' vocational qualification. The initial idea for this project is based on the fact that the participation of migrants, and particularly female migrants, in vocational training programmes supported by the Federal Employment Exchange is clearly below average, although they suffer from high levels of unemployment. Moreover, in comparison with German participants, migrants drop out of courses before completion (30.6 per cent migrants as opposed to 22.6 per cent Germans).

It is part of the project's objectives to investigate the reasons which prevent migrants from participating in these programmes and to find out ways in which adult education should be arranged to take account of the target group's conditions of living and learning.

The activities of the project concentrate on:

- federal co-ordination and advertisement of the migrants' local vocational training programme
- academic assistance and evaluation of some ten vocational training programmes at selected locations
- acquisition and evaluation of hand-outs and learning materials for vocational training programmes with special regard for the intercultural aspects of learning
- development and evaluation of training conceptions for trainers and managers in the field of vocational training for migrants.

The low take-up and higher drop-out rates point to some inadequacy in migrants' vocational training, in respect of vocational guidance and instruction received. The inadequacy is expressed in intercultural misunderstanding, in not taking account of the migrants' living and learning conditions and in not including or even not acknowledging migrants' qualifications and experience. Some of these inadequacies might be relevant for host country learners as well, but migrants are easier to blame for failure because of prejudices and faulty interpretations of their attitudes or behaviour.

Intercultural

Some of these faulty interpretations can be corrected by increasing the knowledge about migrants' experiences in general, but this knowledge itself holds the dangers that migrants are looked at as foreign passport-holders and not as individuals, all with different experiences, ideas, aims and so on. The more concrete communication with migrants takes place, the less people communicate with migrants but rather with the individual persons themselves: a vocational training programme is a very concrete instructional communication process. Intercultural education means a specific view on interaction between individuals and their social and cultural backgrounds; it includes an increase of information about the background of the communication-partner, and an openness to assess one's own behaviour from a different perspective.

Key points

When examining the theoretical approaches on intercultural learning and in many discussions of vocational trainers about their difficulties with migrant participants, our project has come to the following conclusions:

- Intercultural education needs a specific view on interaction concerning individuals with their different social and cultural backgrounds. To direct this interaction successfully, the interactive partners have to be open when they look at each other's behaviour, attitudes and ideas without any stereotype or arrogance. Accepting this definition means abandoning the compensatory approach in education which is particularly difficult in vocational training. Experience of the last 20 years shows that either the deficiencies of migrants are pointed out or there is no education supplied for them at all. At least in this context it might be useful to emphasise not only the statistically describable deficiencies, but also the probable available abilities of migrants which might have developed in the course of their lives – for example, bilingualism, multiculturalism or creativity in constituting an identity.
- The pedagogical view on intercultural learning affects two levels of organised vocational education:
 - the teaching and learning process of the vocational training programme – that means the interaction between the learners themselves and between learners and trainers
 - the qualification process of the trainers.
- Intercultural learning requires specific qualifications and abilities from all people who are involved in a vocational training programme. But there are some features of these trainers' qualifications which are of crucial importance. Trainers must be able, for example:
 - to recognise individual intellectual abilities and practical skills
 - to recognise signals of communication, even if they are not part of someone's usual repertoire
 - to break down stereotyped patterns, to analyse them and reflect the balance of power
 - to comprehend migration as a specific coherence of life condition and history without building up new stereotypes but to find new questions
 - to develop social and communicative abilities
 - to become aware of conflicts and act impartially between the conflicting parties.

4. Other case studies

The Pontian Greeks

*Summary of a paper presented by Dionyssis Mouzakis,
General Secretariat of Adult Education, Athens*

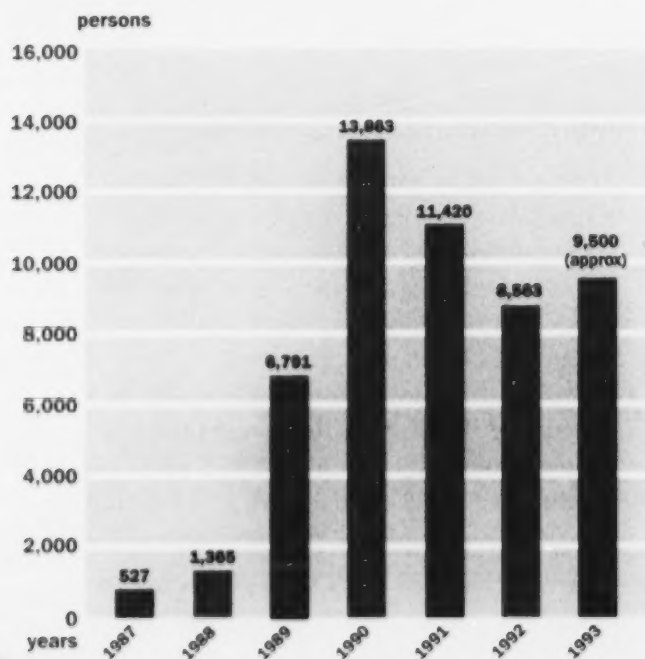
The origin of Pontian Hellenism can be traced back to the era of the Byzantine Empire and even earlier. Pontian Greeks survived as an ethnicity under the Ottoman Empire but were forced into exile from Pontos (on the South Coast of the Black Sea) to the South of the Soviet Union during the "Neo-Turkish Revolution" in the second decade of this century. The Stalinist period put an end to the process of cultural and ethnic re-establishment of their Hellenic identity. Greeks were systematically suppressed and exiled in order to merge with other ethnicities as part of a policy aiming at the elimination of different nations and ethnicities.

Under the new situation in the former Soviet Republics, the old dream of returning to Greece has become the first option for many Pontian Greeks. Their number in the former Soviet Republics is estimated to be 600,000 persons.

Repatriation

Although repatriation procedures involve much hardship, Pontians migrate to Greece in geometric progression. The official figures, based on repatriation visas, are given below.

Figure 4 Numbers of Pontians migrating to Greece during the period 1987 to 1993



Officials of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimate that the number of arrivals will soar to 200,000 per year and more than half the Pontian Greeks will return to Greece by the end of the century.

The Pontians were born and have grown up in a totally different environment in respect of social, cultural and economic realities. In addition to this their linguistic disabilities marginalise them in their new economic and social setting in Greece. This is not a one-way relationship. The Greek community because of the xenophobia and fear of the "Alien" encourages the situation. The Pontians thus face a lot of problems in Greece such as financial, training, housing and lack of accommodation to the Greek way of life.

Motives

Research findings show the following motives for Pontians wishing to return back to Greece:

Following their relatives	31.9%
Wanting to live in "their" country	23.2%
Following other Pontians who left before	17.9%
Had relatives in Greece	7.7%
Ethnic problems in the Soviet Union territories	4.4%
Economic motives	2.6%
Better future for their children	1.9%
Because of the political system in the Soviet Union	0.8%

The same research study revealed the educational levels of Pontians in Greece being of the following order:

University level	27.0%
Secondary level/General	35.0%
Secondary level/Technical	12.0%
Elementary and below	23.0%
Now studying	3.0%

The rate of unemployment among Pontians now living in Greece is 50.2% – amongst men it is 39.1% and for women 60.9%.

Adult education programmes

The General Secretariat for Adult Education of the Ministry of Education, and its regional providing Committees throughout Greece, is the sole governmental service developing adult education programmes in the field of literacy, vocational training and social education. The section for socially excluded persons takes special care of target groups like immigrants, Gypsies (Roma), repatriated Greeks and prisoners.

All these groups are considered to be different from the mainstream Greek society and therefore remain on the margins of social life in terms of equal opportunities and provisions. The General Secretariat realises that the education of these excluded groups constitutes a right for them and an obligation on the part of the community. The main objective of these programmes is the social integration of the socially excluded.

The General Secretariat describes the objectives of their programmes as being the following:

- "We realise this aim as having a dynamic dimension which suggests the equal, autonomous and acceptable co-existence of individuals and groups in the everyday life beyond any prejudice or discrimination. Thus we have to work with both minorities and the community. Our projects are not limited to a formal educational frame but are extended to social skills as well. In addition, we try to combat community prejudice against minorities. The projects we carry out for Pontian Greeks are based on our main aims of social integration. Therefore the programme curriculum includes:
- Learning the modern Greek language, Greek history, literature, labour laws and Greek law in general
- Vocational training – special vocational terminology for qualified individuals, e.g. doctors, mechanics, managers, etc. Vocational training also for unskilled individuals
- Social support activities. This includes social work (for individual support and career guidance); information about Greek administration and services; counselling about the Greek way of life and social problems that affect Greek society; cultural activities and educational visits
- Sensitising the local community against xenophobia, prejudice and discrimination."

Tuscany

*Summary of a paper presented by Stephano Garofani,
Associazione Italiana Educazione Degli Adulti (AIDEA), Prato, Italy.*

In Tuscany, there are 58,411 immigrants. The breakdown is as follows:

11,538 from the European community	(19.75%)
11,970 from Eastern European countries	(20.49%)
11,796 from Africa	(20.19%)
10,959 from Asia	18.76%)
5,370 from other towns	(9.01%)

This data however only refers to immigrants who are legally registered. Alongside this group there are a large number of immigrants who have entered Italy illegally. This group is in effect hidden. Within the population in Prato this fact is reflected in the local Chinese community. Officially, the data shows that there are only 140 registered Chinese persons. But in fact, in reality there are least 2,000-3,000 Chinese people living in Prato. The same discrepancy also applies to immigrants from Albania, Yugoslavia and Africa.

The existence of migrants have given rise to the following problems:

- the need for better social integration
- the demand for a deeper exchange between local people and immigrant communities
- the need of social education in order to guarantee work
- necessity of paying more attention to problems concerning their legal protection.

Recently, the province of Tuscany has established a project in Prato to work with children and women coming from ex-Yugoslavia. The project consists of a number of local voluntary organisations and educational establishments. The following programmes are in the course of realisation at local levels as part of this project:

- basic literacy for migrant children and parents in the primary school
- vocational and non-vocational literacy classes
- training for police officials in racial awareness
- creation of a multi-cultural library
- art and theatrical work aimed at greater social integration.

Part Four

Developing good practice in home school liaison

Presentation by Lia Dayal, Leicester Home-School Liaison Project, England

The overall aim of any effective home-school liaison will be to improve parental involvement and thereby establish relationships in which teachers and parents are partners who:

- respect and trust each other
- can communicate effectively
- are working together towards the same end, that is, a more effective and appropriate education for children.

This will involve:

- the need for clarity of communication which informs parents about the curriculum and which informs teachers about children
- the need for parents to be considered as co-educators with their teachers and for this to be reflected in their involvement in schools, at home and their children's education
- the need for parents as co-educators to be extended into the assessment, profiling and reporting systems of schools to take into account a totality of children's achievements
- the need for parents and teachers to work together in the construction of the curriculum which is relevant and meaningful to the children for whom they have a responsibility
- the need to predict ahead of time what information parents might value and therefore provide opportunities for them to get that information.

1. Ideas to develop good practice in home-school liaison

The following ideas can be used to both encourage and develop partnership between schools and parents:

- promoting oracy at home.
- shared reading schemes.
- newsletters accessible to all parents.
- good home-school communication.
- operating an open door policy for parents.

- encouraging parents in the classroom with support to enable this to happen successfully eg workshops where parents can work alongside their children.
- sharing the curriculum. This can be accomplished by listening to parents and valuing their contribution as co-educators. By encouraging children to talk to parents about what they do in school. By holding curriculum evenings, and by holding parents' evenings.
- establishing parents groups where parents can meet, talk about their children's education, support their own education and become involved in the working of the school.
- developing home visits. This means to move on from addressing problems and taking messages to looking at and supporting parents' involvement in their children's education.
- making use of extended visits which children make back to their 'home' so that they become meaningful to both the children's education and the school.
- networking with other agencies within the community.
- effectively involving parents in the inspection procedures of the school.
- being involved in supporting children and their families during each stage of their school career-induction, transfer to secondary, examination choices, vocational educational and careers guidance.

Parental involvement in schools – indicators of good practice

The following practices need to be considered within the framework of the schools home-school liaison policy.

Parental involvement is a whole-school issue involving all staff and not simply those designated as responsible for home-school liaison.

Pre-School transfer between phases:

- contact with parents prior to entry to school
- individual dialogue with parents
- parental involvement in admission documents
- school booklets produced in clear, jargon-free English and in community languages
- work packs for use at home
- meetings for parents prior to children starting school
- links with pre-school groups to ensure continuity and progression
- visits to the school and classroom by groups of children prior to admittance
- sensitive admission procedures
- easy access into the building
- welcoming – displays and notices in different languages
- space for parents to meet, wait for child, toys for younger children, etc.
- easily-understood access to the teacher when and how
- preparedness of the school to go out into the community when appropriate eg home visiting.

Access to the curriculum:

- sharing with parents the school's values and principles
- within this context parents need to understand:
 - how the curriculum is delivered?
 - what is the whole curriculum?
 - why the contents are selected?
 - when aspects of the curriculum are delivered?
- parents need access to information which is clear and aids understanding
- schools need to listen and to seek to understand parents' viewpoint and (within framework of the schools' value system) to make any necessary changes in organisation and management
- parents need access to information and understanding, for example about their own child's progress.

Involvement in children's learning in school and home:

- parents involvement should support and complement the work of the school both when they are working:
 - independently of the school
 - with the school either in the school or at home.

Communication systems:

- should be open and accessible
- school to home written communication should be:
 - jargon free and uncomplicated
 - in appropriate community languages
- home to school communication should be accepted:
 - in community languages
 - not necessarily written by parents.

Parent education:

- school is often the first access that adults have to education and therefore should provide:
 - guidance
 - access to information
 - access to other education
 - parental education in parenting.

Parents' role in school development

- parental involvement in the school community
- parental involvement in decision making, e.g. via parents meetings
- parental involvement as governors
- parents should be able to bring a cultural dimension to school that may be missing.

2. Training ideas for improving home-school liaison

This section contains ideas which can be used by teachers to promote a greater involvement of parents in schools for incorporating their experience into the curriculum of the school and enabling teachers to review their home-school practice.

Ideas for talking and listening at home:

- exploring games from different countries: contemporary and historical
- finding out what parents, grandparents, did at school eg:
 - what kind of timetable they had
 - what kind of clubs and sports existed
 - subjects studied
 - journey to and from school, etc.
- talk to parents/grandparents about what they ate as children; what food was available; what sort of packaging was used
- explore where food comes from using a world map
- story telling:
 - parents/grandparents to remember stories they were told either at home or at school
 - tell the children half a story and get them to talk to their parents about possible endings
- nursery rhymes – what nursery rhymes do parents/grandparents remember
- get parents and grandparents to tell stories of extremes of weather
- employment the parents/grandparents had when they were children
- stories about moving house, emotion about moving house
- stories about holidays
- collect a piece of evidence to represent each member of the family
- develop a child's time line to record the important events in a child's life, e.g. birth, first teeth, walking, holiday visits, visitors etc.

Extended visits abroad

Several children regularly or periodically visit their 'home' country. Such visits rather than being seen as an interruption in the child's education can in fact become an integral part of a home-school liaison strategy.

The most effective way of undertaking this is to get the young people to keep a diary, the diary should include the following information:

- journey
 - details of the journey
- transport
 - buses, trains, bicycles, carts, rickshaws, etc.

- shopping
 - outlining shops, markets, supermarkets, street vendors etc
 - how much things cost, including an average shopping list
- clothes
 - everyday clothes, clothes for special occasions, children's, women's and men's clothes
- food
 - who prepares the food, and what kind of food people eat, does the whole family eat at the same time, was the food different from at home
- houses
 - describe houses that you have visited, describe big and small houses that you have seen, what are houses like inside
- special occasions
 - weddings, festivals, etc.
- schools
 - try to visit a school, what subject do they do? How the classroom is organised? Do they have desks? Are there pictures on the walls?
- places of interest
 - write about and include pictures of temples, mosques, palaces and places of interest visited
- the work people do
- types of farming
- the weather
- what aspects of the country made you particularly happy and what made you unhappy?

Reviewing staff practice:

The following questions can act as a framework for staff to undertake a review of home-school liaison:

- how do parents involve themselves in the life of the school at the moment?
- what are the channels of communication/points of contact between the school and parents?
- how could these be developed?
- how are parents who involve themselves in the life of the school supported?
- how could the involvement of black and other minority ethnic parents be developed and their work be supported?

3. Conclusion

In these deliberations no consideration was given to the fact that the school curriculum in all European countries is strongly Eurocentrically orientated. It remains to be examined whether, and to what extent, schools can not only convey knowledge and information about other cultures to a greater degree than up to now, but also, and above all, with what aim in mind they should do so.

This does not mean that they should pile up knowledge and information about foreign countries, but, rather more, to acquire a completely new way of thinking by way of which both teachers and pupils come to understand that their own culture is not necessarily the best. A relative view taken upon European culture and upon the idea of its value so closely bound up with it, would embrace that aim and would lead to the creation of a new cultural identity.

In this context the question of Eurocentrism is decisive. It has political and ethnic dimensions and cannot limit itself to moralising appeals. It is a task which breaks the bounds of the school and should eventually become an institutionalised element in all educational establishments. The experience within adult education can play a major part in this debate. An appeal is therefore made to the European Commission to further such projects as set themselves the task of undertaking measures of innovation in this direction.

It is now widely accepted that positive parental involvement in partnership with schools is one of the prerequisites of effective schooling and that co-operation between home and school can raise educational achievement. Accordingly there is now considerable interest in encouraging parents to participate more directly in their children's schooling, in giving parents more access to information about education, and in developing more structured home-school links.

Given the relationships that parents from minority ethnic groups have had with schools over the past 30 years, it is likely that the involvement of these parents as genuine partners in education will be more difficult to achieve than for their white counterparts. The research literature suggests that educational professionals still regard parents from minority ethnic groups as posing a problem for schools rather than as assets in the educational process.

Adult education strategies, aimed at parents from minority and majority ethnic groups, can play a key role in overcoming xenophobia and intolerance by socialising the children who face discrimination. This report gives examples of current practice from across Europe, an elaboration of common themes and guidelines for developing good practice in home-school liaison.

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